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ENTOMOSPORIUM LEAF SPOT OF LOQUAT

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Loquat, Eriobotrya japonica (Thunb.) Lindl., is an evergreen tree of China, grown as an ornamental as well as cultivated for its fruit. It is commonly grown in Florida and has a wide range of habitat which includes the Atlantic coast states from Virginia southward, the southeastern states, the Gulf coast and the Pacific coast states (6).

Leaf spot of loquat, also known as leaf blight, is caused by Entomosporium maculatum Lev, with the perfect stage Fabraea maculata (Lev.) Atk. (4) [=Diplocarpon maculatum (Atk.) Jorstad (5)]. The host range of plants also susceptible to Entomosporium includes quince, Cydonia oblonga Mill.; pear, Pyrus spp.; Juneberry, Amelanchier spp.; flowering quince, Chaenomeles spp.; crabapple, Malus spp,; peach, Prunus persica (L.) Batsch; mountain-ash, Sorbus sitchensis Roem. (6); Photinia spp. (3); and firethorn, Pyracantha coccinea Roem. (2). Three new species Rhaphiolepis are now presented as additional hosts of E. maculatum, R. indica Lindl., R. delacouri Andre, R. umbellata Makino. This disease generally occurs wherever loquat is grown in the United States and has also been reported from Canada, Argentina, Australia, India, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, and South Africa (5).

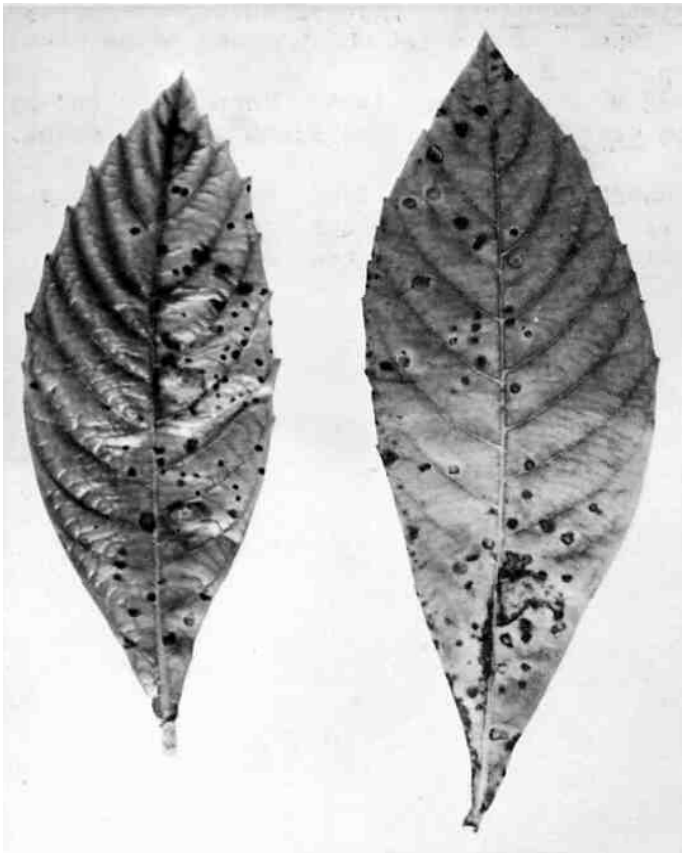

Fig. 1. Entomosporium leaf spot of loquat.

[1]Plant Disease Records, Plant Pathology Section, Division of Plant Industry, Florida Department of Agriculture, Gainesville.

SYMPTOMS. The first symptom of infection is a tiny, discrete, more or less circular, reddish brown spot. Upon enlarging, the spots develop a purplish margin with a rather indistinct yellowish green halo (Fig. 1). The center becomes ashy brown marked with tiny "blisters" which are the acervuli or fruiting structures of the fungus. The leaf spots tend to coalesce, forming larger lesions. Heavily infected leaves fall prematurely, resulting in severe defoliation and a consequent decrease in the vitality of the tree. Fallen, infected leaves from the previous year as well as other nearby infected host plants can serve as sources of fungus spores in initiating new and repeated infections.

CONTROL. The most effective control of this disease consists of the removal and destruction of infected leaves that have fallen to the ground and the application of a fungicide such as a fixed copper or a dithiocarbamate (maneb, zineb, ferbam, etc.) (1).

References

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